

RailTex will control 20 Class III railroads in the United States.

The transaction was scheduled to be consummated on or shortly after December 31, 1998.

The purpose of the transaction is to simplify RailTex's corporate structure and eliminate costs associated with separate accounting, tax, bookkeeping and reporting functions. The properties of the rail carriers involved in this transaction are located in the States of Michigan, Kansas, Missouri and Texas.

The merger of MS and GRE into MMRR is a transaction within a corporate family of the type specifically exempted from prior review and approval under 49 CFR 1180.2(d)(3). The parties state that the transaction will not result in adverse changes in service levels, significant operational changes, or a change in the competitive balance with carriers operating outside the corporate family.

Under 49 U.S.C. 10502(g), the Board may not use its exemption authority to relieve a rail carrier of its statutory obligation to protect the interests of its employees. Section 11326(c), however, does not provide for labor protection for transactions under sections 11324 and 11325 that involve only Class III rail carriers. Because this transaction involves Class III rail carriers only, the Board, under the statute, may not impose labor protective conditions for this transaction.

If the notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the transaction.

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to STB Finance Docket No. 33693, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Karl Morell, P.C., Ball Janik LLP, Suite 225, 1455 F Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at [WWW.STB.DOT.GOV](http://WWW.STB.DOT.GOV).

Decided: January 12, 1999.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,  
Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Vernon A. Williams,**  
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-1113 Filed 1-19-99; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 46X)]

#### Soo Line Railroad Company— Abandonment Exemption—in St. Paul, Ramsey County, MN

On December 31, 1998, Soo Line Railroad Company, doing business as Canadian Pacific Railway (Soo), filed with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon a line of railroad known as the St. Paul Terminal Trackage extending from milepost 17.29± (southeast of Jackson Street) to the end of the line at milepost 18.19± (near I-35E North), a distance of .90± miles in Ramsey County, MN. The line traverses U.S. Postal Service Zip Code 55117 and includes no stations.

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in the railroad's possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by *Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen*, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by April 20, 1999.

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each OFA must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$1,000. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that, following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than February 9, 1999. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-57 (Sub-No. 46X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Diane P. Gerth, 150 South Fifth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402. Replies to the Soo petition are due on or before February 9, 1999.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available at (202) 565-1695.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be made available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at "[WWW.STB.DOT.GOV](http://WWW.STB.DOT.GOV)."

Decided: January 12, 1999.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,  
Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Vernon A. Williams,**  
Secretary.

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Internal Revenue Service

#### Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Form 12196

**AGENCY:** Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the IRS is soliciting comments concerning Form 12196, Small Business Office Order Blank.

**DATES:** Written comments should be received on or before March 22, 1999 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Garrick R. Shear, Internal Revenue